

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-32 and 46-53 (cancelled).

33. (Original) A binding member removing apparatus, comprising a removing unit for removing a binding member from a bundle of sheets of paper and discriminating means for determining whether or not said binding member has been removed from said bundle of sheets of paper after the operation for removal of said binding member by said removing unit.

34. (Original) A binding member removing apparatus according to claim 33, which further comprises a controller for performing again the operation for removal by said removing unit after said discriminating means has determined that said binding member has not been removed.

35. (Original) A binding member removing apparatus according to claim 34, wherein said controller limits the number of repeated circles of the operation for removal by said removing unit to a prescribed number.

36. (Original) A binding member removing apparatus according to claim 35, which further comprises a display for posting an alarm when said discriminating means determines that said binding member has not been removed after said operation for removal is performed up to a prescribed number of repetitions.

37. (Original) A binding member removing apparatus according to claim 34, wherein said controller, when repeating said operation for removal, performs said operation for removal with the operating conditions of said removing unit changed.

38. (Original) A binding member removing apparatus according to claim 33, which further comprises a sensor for detecting the binding material in a bundle of sheets of paper, said discriminating means forming a judgment that said binding material has not been removed when said sensor detects said binding material after the operation for removal.

39. (Original) An automatic document feeder for sequentially transmitting document sheets from a bundle of document sheets, comprising a removing unit for removing said binding material from said bundle of document sheets and discriminating means for forming a judgment whether or not said binding material has been removed from said bundle of document sheets after the operation for removal of said binding material by said removing unit.

40. (Original) An automatic document feeder according to claim 39, which further comprises a controller for repeating said operation for removal by said removing unit when said discriminating means has formed a judgment that said binding material has not been removed.

41. (Original) An automatic document feeder according to claim 40, wherein said controller limits the number of repeated circles of the operation for removal by said removing unit to a prescribed number.

42. (Original) An automatic document feeder according to claim 39, which further comprises a tray for mounting therein a bundle of document sheets, a conveying unit for sequentially conveying document sheets from said bundle of document sheets on said tray, and a conveying controller for controlling said conveying unit so as to convey said document sheets sequentially after said binding member has been removed by said removing unit from said bundle of document sheets.

43. (Original) An automatic document feeder according to claim 42, wherein said conveying controller stops the conveyance of document sheets by said conveying unit when said discriminating means forms a judgment that said binding material has not been removed.

44. (Original) A sheet processing apparatus for performing a prescribed processing on a sheet, comprising a removing unit for removing a binding member from a bundle of sheets of paper and discriminating means for determining whether or not said binding member has been removed from said bundle of sheets of paper after the operation for removal of said binding member by said removing unit.

45. (Original) An image forming apparatus for forming an image on a sheet, comprising a removing unit for removing a binding member from a bundle of sheets of paper and discriminating means for determining whether or not said binding member has been removed from said bundle of sheets of paper after the operation for removal of said binding member by said removing unit.